EPI Update for Friday, March 30, 2012 Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE) lowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- New specimen collection instructions for AFB testing
- Chickenpox vaccination reminder
- Influenza update
- Enjoying holiday eggs safely
- Meeting announcements and training opportunities

New Specimen Collection Instructions for AFB testing

The State Hygienic Laboratory (SHL) has updated the specimen collection instructions for clinical specimens submitted for mycobacteria (AFB/TB) testing. Please discard/destroy any previous specimen collection documents for mycobacteria (AFB/TB) testing and ensure that you are using the one **dated 2/15/2012** (as seen in the bottom left of the document).

Some of the updates include:

- 1. Which kit to use for submission of urine specimens
- 2. The timing of the collection of sputum specimens
- 3. Urine collection
- 4. The need to store all specimens (except blood and CSF) at 2 degrees C to 8 degrees C as soon as possible after collection through transport to SHL

The updated document is now posted on their web site and is available at www.shl.uiowa.edu/kitsquotesforms/mycobacteriaafbcollectioninstructions.pdf.

Chickenpox vaccination reminder

Chickenpox usually occurs more frequently in winter and early spring. Please use this opportunity to continue to vaccinate patients against chickenpox in accordance with the ACIP standard recommendations. For more information on the vaccine recommendation for chickenpox, please visit www.cdc.gov/chickenpox/vaccination.html.

Suspected chickenpox outbreaks should be reported to the health department. (Individual cases are not required to be reported.)

Influenza update

Influenza activity in Iowa is being downgraded from widespread to regional. While influenza activity is decreasing, a high number of cases are still occurring. So far this season, influenza A (H3) viruses have been overwhelmingly predominant in Iowa, accounting for about 86 percent of all positive influenza specimens tested. To see the influenza weekly report, visit

www.idph.state.ia.us/IdphArchive/Archive.aspx?channel=FluReports.

Enjoying holiday eggs safely

Hard-boiled eggs are often used as holiday decorations and in party activities (such as egg hunts) during the Easter and Passover holidays. Please share these basic safety tips for cooking, handling and consuming eggs:

Preparation tips

- Place a single layer of eggs in a saucepan.
- Add water to at least one inch above the eggs.
- Cover the pan, bring the water to a boil, and carefully remove the pan from the heat.
- Let the eggs stand (18 minutes for extra large eggs, 15 minutes for large, 12 minutes for medium).
- Run cold water over the eggs.
- When the eggs are cool enough to handle, place them in an uncovered container in the refrigerator where they can air-dry.

Storage tips

 Keep hard-cooked holiday eggs refrigerated until just before use. Keep them fully chilled by storing them on a shelf inside the refrigerator, not in the refrigerator door.

Decoration tips

- Consider buying different eggs for decorating and eating.
- When decorating, be sure to use food-grade dyes; you can use commercial egg dyes, liquid food coloring, or fruit-drink powders.

Eating holiday eggs, such as those used for Easter egg hunts

- Hide the eggs in places that are protected from dirt, pets and other potential sources of bacteria.
- To prevent bacterial growth, don't let eggs sit in hiding places for more than two hours.
- Throw away eggs that were cracked, dirty or not found within two hours
- Immediately place the eggs back in the refrigerator until it's time to eat.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

ISNO annual spring school nurse conference

The Iowa School Nurse Organization will be hosting their annual conference on April 19-20 at the Hotel at Kirkwood in Cedar Rapid.

For more information and to register, visit www.isno.org/cues.html.

Have a healthy and warm week!

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